

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

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SUBJECT Critical Shortage of Borax in East Germany

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. The supply of borax in East Germany is at a critical stage. Imports of borax in 1954 amounted to about 1,000 tons less than was required and planned. At the end of November 1954, borax kept in the State Reserves was released for industrial use. An equal amount was to have been returned to the State Reserves before the end of 1954. As of 11 January 1955, only 30 tons had been returned.
2. Borax is badly needed by the Schott Genossen firm of Jena, which produces clear glass used by Zeiss-Jena in the production of camera lenses. Borax is also used in preparing enamel for metals. Products to be manufactured using borax are generally destined for export. Borax is also used for East German production of boric acid. Production of clear, transparent glass at Schott Genossen was seriously curtailed in the last quarter of 1954. An unnamed representative of Zeiss-Jena told East German officials in charge of supplying raw materials, that this enterprise was producing lenses for aviation cameras, and for Contax cameras only as a secondary priority.
3. In mid-December 1954, warehouses of DHZ Chemie and of a privately-owned firm, M. B. Vogel of Leipzig with its branch plant in Glauchau, had a total of 200 tons of borax. Orders were issued by the State Committee for Material Procurement (SCMP) to ship the 200 tons of borax to the State Reserves. In view of the threat of work stoppage because of lack of borax, the SCMP was asked to allocate this borax for industrial use.
4. The principle source of borax used in East Germany is boracite. Sources of this material are mostly controlled by U.S. firms.

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